(b) if so, the number of such centres set up so far in the State; and

(c) the details of expenditure incurred for running them and the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI P. RADHAKIRISHNAN): (a) Yes Sir, the Government had launched in 1994-95 a scheme for setting up of "Youth Development Centres" throughout the country, including in Himachal Pradesh.

(b) A total of 37 Youth Development Centres have been set up in the State so far.

(c) Government of India sanctions a one-time grant of Rs. 30,000/ per Youth Development Centre. Thereafter, these Centres are expected to raise their own resources and be self-sustaining.

Deterioration in sports standards

†2887. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the standard of sports in the country has been very disappointing;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take any specific and effective steps to encourage meritorious students at District-level; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SUSHREE UMA BHARTI): (a) No, Sir. However the level of sports in the country needs to be improved upto the level of International standards.

(b) and (c) Under the scheme of Promotion of Sports and Games in Schools, Government of Indian gives grant to State/UT Governments for organisation of District and State level inter-school sports competitions. The winners are given Rolling Trophy along with cash awards as incentives.

The addition to this, Sports Authority of India (SAI) also has the National Coaching Scheme under which coaches are posted at District Coaching Centres where they impart training to local youth in the disciplines identified by the State Sports Authorities.

Besides, the SAI is already implementing the following scheme which help talented sports persons at the district level to improve their skills and performance:—

1. National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC)

2. Army Boys Sports Companies (ABSC)

3. SAI Training Centres (STC)

4. Special Area Games (SAG)

5. Centre of Excellence (COE)

Under these schemes, Sub-junior and junior sports persons are selected on the basis of merit and inducted in the NSTC and ABSC schemes. Junior sports persons are inducted in the STC, SAG and Center of Excellence Scheme. The SAG scheme is especially on inducting and nurturing talent form rural, tribal and coastal regions of the country. All trainees are provided with boarding/ lodging, training facilities, sports equipment, kit, medical cover, competition exposure along with scientific training under expert coaches and scientific backup.

Developing sports infrastructure

2888. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of funds allotted during the Ninth Five Year Plan for development of sports;

(b) whether Government have any plan of incentives for development of sports infrastructure in States, like Manipur where more national and international sports awardees are produced; and